

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USDOCOSOUTH
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MET IN ROME ON JUNE 1-3. PARTY SECRETARY ROMITA CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT FOR INEFFECTIVENESS BUT MADE CLEAR HE DID NOT WANT ANY CHANGE IN THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT. ROMTIA, ECHOED BY OTHER PARTY LEADERS, ADVOCATED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "SOCIALIST AREA" AS THE BASIS OF PARTY POLICY. THIS SESSION MARKED A CLEAR STEP BY THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO ALIGN ITSELF WITH THE SOCIALISTS. END SUMMARY.

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1. MEETING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVEN MONTHS, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SICIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY CAME TOGETHER IN ROME ON JUNE 1-3. PARTY SECRETARY ROMITA OPENED THE SESSION WITH A REPORT WHICH STRESSED TWO INTERRELATED THEMES--THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S INTENTION OF FOLLOWING AN EQUIDISTANT COURSE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS AND THE PARTY'S

DESIRE TO ESTABLISH A "SOCIALIST AREA" TO ELIMINATE FOREVER THE DANGER OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. ALTHOUGH CENSURING THE SOCIALISTS FOR THEIR "OSCILLATION AND LACK OF COHERENCE," HE PRAISED THE NEW SOCIALIST LEADERS FOR "PRESENTING THEMSELVES AND THEIR PARTY FOR THE FIRST TIME AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM." TURNING TO THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT, ROMITA CRITICIZED THE PRIME MINISTER'S "BAFFLING BEHAVIOR" AND HIS GENERAL INEFFECTIVENESS IN DEALING WITH THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. HE COMPLAINED IN PARTICULAR OF ANDREOTTI'S SHILLY-SHALLYING OVER THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW INTERIOR MINISTER AND HIS FAILURE TO CONSULT THE PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY OVER THE RECENT MINI-BUDGET. AT THE SAME TIME THE PARTY SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THAT HE ADVOCATED NO CHANGE IN THE EXISTING GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENT AND HAD NO INTENTION OF PRECIPITATING A POLITICAL CRISIS.

2. ROMITA'S THEMES WERE REPEATED BY MOST OF THE OTHER IMPORTANT PARTY LEADERS DURING THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION. PARTY PRESIDENT SARAGAT CHARACTERIZED THE "LAY AND SOCIALIST AREA" AS ONE OF THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLICY. HE MADE PLAIN, HOWEVER, THAT THE REPUBLICANS AND LIBERALS WOULD HAVE NO PLACE IN IT SINCE THE FORMER IS THE PARTY OF ENTREPRENEURS AND THE LATTER IS TOO STARKLY CONSERVATIVE. SARAGAT

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ALSO CALLED UPON HIS PARTY TO CONTINUE TO PROMOTE THE DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, RECOGNIZING THAT A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF IDEOLOGICAL REVISION HAD ALREADY OCCURRED. STRIKING A DIFFERENT NOTE FROM ROMITA, THE PARTY PRESIDENT DEFENDED THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT, MAINTAINING THAT "BASICALLY THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING THE BEST IT CAN." A GOOD DEAL OF SARAGAT'S SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WITH STRONG PRAISE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S OPPOSITION TO SOVIET EXPANSIONISM AND A HARSH CONDEMNATION OF THE SOVIET UNION AS THE WORLD'S LEADING IMPERIALIST STATE.

3. SLIGHTLY DIFFERING VIEWS WERE EXPRESSED BY LUIGI PRETI OF THE PARTY'S RIGHT WING, WHO WAS CRITICAL OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY FOR ITS PERSISTENT DIVERGENCE FROM THE OTHER PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY, AND DI GIESI WHO DECLARED THAT IT MUST BE THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' OBJECTIVE "NOT TO GOVERN WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS BUT IN PLACE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS."

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4. CONCLUDING THE SESSION THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE APPROVED A POLICY STATEMENT WHICH INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS:

-- THE ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS CONFIRMED THE CORRECTNESS OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT'S POLICY OF THE "LAY AND SOCIALIST AREA." THE APPROACH IS A PRECONDITION BOTH FOR ASSOCIATION WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND FOR OBSTRUCTING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC DOMINANCE ON THE ONE HAND AND THE POTENTIAL HEGEMONY OF THE COMMUNISTS ON THE OTHER. THIS APPROACH IS ALSO PART OF A STRATEGY WHICH COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE REORGANIZATION OF THE ITALIAN LEFT IF AND WHEN THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONTINUES ITS PROCESS OF IDEOLOGICAL REVISION.

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-- IN THE CURRENT EMERGENCY SITUATION THE PRESENT

GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENT SHOULD NOT BE CHANGED. HOWEVER, THE COLLABORATION OF THE PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY WOULD BE PREJUDICED IF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS REVERT TO CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS OR IF THE COMMUNISTS TRY TO GO BEYOND THE PRESENT EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENT.

-- THE PRICE OF OVERCOMING THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS MUST NOT BE APID SOLELY BY THE WORKING CLASS. THE PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEZZOGIORNO.

-- THE PARTY REAFFIRMS ITS DEDICATION TO EUROPE AND THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND STRESSES THE NEED FOR NATO TO TAKE A FIRM POSITION AGAINST SOVIET DESTABILIZATION IN AFRICA. THIS DECLARATION HAD THE AGREEMENT OF ALL BUT FOUR MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, RIGHETTI, BEMPORAD, CARIGLIA, AND LUPIS.

5. ASSESSMENT. BUOYED BY ITS FAIR SHOWING IN THE RECENT ELECTION, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY EVIDENTLY NOW FEELS STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN SUNK IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. WITH THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND SUPPORTED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE PARTY IS NOW MARCHING WHILE NOT STEP IN STEP WITH THE SOCIALISTS AT LEAST ON A PARALLEL PATH. THE CRITICISM OF THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMITMENT TO AN AUTONOMOUS POLITICAL COURSE ALONG WITH A DISAVOWAL OF ANY INTENT OF UPSETTING THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT PRECISELY DUPLICATE SOCIALIST POSITIONS. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' REVIVIED DEDICATION TO THE

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"SOCIALIST AREA"--WHICH MEANS SOMETHING BETWEEN COOPERATION AND MERGER OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND SOCIALISTS--ALSO TENDS TO HARMONIZE THE CONTEMPORARY STRATEGIES OF THE TWO PARTIES.

6. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAVE SENT THE SOCIALISTS A CLEAR SIGNAL. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE HEARD IT. AN EDITORIAL, SAID TO BE INSPIRED BY CRAXI, APPEARING ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE CURRENT ISSUE OF AVANTI STATES: "WE ARE FOLLOWING THE EVOLUTION OF THESE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE AND WILL RESPOND QUICKLY AND PRECISELY TO CRITICISM AND TO EVENTS AS THEY DEVELOP. IF THE PSDI DOES NOT ACCEPT AND WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY PRESSURES TO FOLLOW A POLICY OF DISAGREEMENT AND CONFLICT WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND DOES NOT INTERPRET THE SO-CALLED

"SOCIALIST AREA" IN AN ADVERSE WAY, THIS CONSTITUTES
AND WILL CONSTITUTE AN EXTREMELY FAVORABLE
DEVELOPMENT WHICH THE PSI WILL ASSESS AND EVALUATE
APPROPRIATELY." HOLMES

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